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# *MEDIA ADVISORY*

Louisiana  
Department of State



Al Ater  
Secretary of State

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## **STATE SUCCESSFULLY MOVES TO NEW VOTING SYSTEM WITH SATURDAY'S ELECTIONS**

BATON ROUGE – Secretary of State Al Ater announces the first step in implementing the new voting system in Louisiana was successfully accomplished across the state during last Saturday's elections. By law, election results are certified by the Secretary of State's Office three days following the election.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) mandated that all states replace lever type voting systems by the congressional elections in 2006. Louisiana purchased a new \$39 million voting system last fall with federal dollars to implement mainly in its rural parishes. Most metropolitan parishes in the state were already using the new voting system and the State was already compliant in most of the HAVA's other requirements, including a statewide voter registration database.

Saturday's election on the new AVC full face machines was conducted successfully in Jefferson, Calcasieu, St. Mary, St. John, Iberia, Tangipahoa, Beauregard, Vernon and Jefferson Davis parishes.

"Each of this weekend's elections was conducted successfully," Ater said. "All clerks of courts, registrars of voters, poll commissioners and parish election board members conducted the elections in their parishes in a professional and accurate manner. We've received positive feedback from voters in each parish and parish election officials have complemented the ease of use of the new voting system."

Jefferson and Calcasieu parishes had used the voting system for many years. The machines in their parishes now also have the new audio for visually impaired voters and the software upgrade on their systems. The clerk of courts' offices and the Department of State's Elections Division worked hand-in-hand for a very successful election.

"It takes strong election officials in parishes to be able to train and conduct elections in such a smooth fashion with a new system," Ater said. "Our entire elections' staff appreciates all of the parish employees that are so dedicated to having a great elections system and are willing to go the extra distance to not only work with the new system but to also learn the extent of the system to the fullest."

Some of these same parishes will use the machines again for the April 29, 2006 election. One additional parish, Allen Parish, will use the new system on that date for a proposition election.

Each clerk of court has demonstration machines for any voters who are interested in viewing them, and they are encouraged to do so by contacting their local clerk of court.

The new Early Voting system – the Edge Voting System – was also used for the first time in this election. Thirty-four parish registrars used the system for early voting. Registrars across the state commented on how much easier and speedier the new system operated compared to ones used in the past. The remaining parish registrars will go to the new Edge Voting System no later than the July election.

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